

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<http://www.vansd.org/future>

On November 27, 2006, the Board of Directors authorized the superintendent to initiate a strategic planning process that would build upon the accomplishments of the district's first strategic plan with the explicit intent of creating the finest school system possible. Design II, the second generation planning effort, was launched in January 2007. Staff and community members were engaged in shaping the future of Vancouver Public Schools through presentations, symposia, listserv groups, focus groups, and surveys asking them to assess the system's internal strengths and weaknesses and to identify external opportunities and threats.

Nearly 2,000 sets of input were gathered and educational best practices were referenced to help shape the plan. Goal Area Teams composed of more than 100 staff and community representatives were involved in writing the vision statements, goals, and target objectives, and a draft plan was published for public review prior to final adoption by the board on January 14, 2008. The new strategic plan contains 18 goals and 70 target objectives that will define the district's priorities for five years or longer. Additionally, the plan includes a revised mission statement, new core principles, and criteria for performance excellence.

Mission

To define its central purpose and to guide decision-making, the district developed a new mission statement:

Excellence in Education

In partnership with home and community, Vancouver Public Schools provides an innovative learning environment that engages and empowers each student to develop the knowledge and essential skills to become a competent, responsible, and compassionate citizen.

"Our mission is focused on individual student success. We want each and every graduate of Vancouver Public Schools to be ready for college, career, and life experiences."

**Steven T. Webb, Ed.D.
Superintendent**

Core Principles

The district also adopted new core principles: balanced, well-rounded, and relevant education; high standards and expectations; nurturing and joyful learning experiences; visionary leadership; continuous improvement; collaboration and teamwork; performance, research, and results driven; valuing the worth, dignity, and capability of every person; and equity and justice.

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Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities, identified through the staff and community engagement process, will extend the district's efforts to transform and improve public education for the 21st century:

- *Knowledge, Creativity and Performance*—Balanced, well-rounded, and personalized education that begins with early learning, engages all students, and is relevant to their future
- *Culture and Capacity*—Learner-focused collaboration and professional development
- *Time and Space*—Different uses of time, space, and technology to maximize learning potential
- *Relationships and Connections*—Integrated school-community partnerships that mobilize resources to support children and families

Target Initiatives for 2008-09

During the 2008-09 school year, the district launched the following target initiatives:

- *Authentic student engagement*—The district will examine current barriers to learning and will identify instructional best practices that empower students to assume more active roles in their learning.
- *Learning options*— The district will conduct a needs assessment to evaluate the alignment of current programs of choice and other learning options with the knowledge, skills, habits of mind, and attributes needed for success in higher education and careers.
- *Communication plan for early childhood learning*— The district and its early learning partners will prepare a comprehensive communication plan and produce media and materials focused on early childhood learning. Additionally, the district will create or expand partnerships with local agencies, health care providers, and community organizations to help distribute information about early childhood learning.
- *Differentiated instruction for early childhood learning programs*—The district will implement a variety of instructional delivery models for kindergarten based on students' readiness to learn.
- *Resource allocation model*—The district will implement a budgeting process that aligns existing resources with organizational values and strategic initiatives.
- *Family-community resource centers*—The district will identify, based on need and readiness, the initial target schools for placement of family-community resource centers. Additionally, the district will collaborate with partners to begin establishing resource centers at the initial target schools.

This work will continue. These target initiatives will become momentum initiatives in 2009-10.

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Target Initiatives for 2009-10

In 2009-10, the district will launch the following target initiatives:

- *Professional Learning Communities*—The district will provide focused training and dedicated time for educators to collaborate so that they can improve teaching and learning.
- *Powerful Teaching and Learning*—The district will put into practice a common framework for high-quality instruction in all schools.
- *Innovative Practices*—The district will encourage innovation through a competitive grant process for school-wide initiatives designed to increase student achievement.
- *Flexible Learning Environments*—The district will develop and begin to implement a plan for the use of technology as a teaching, learning, productivity, communication and collaboration tool.
- *Shared Responsibility*—The district will engage stakeholder representatives in defining their own roles and responsibilities for building and sustaining an excellent school system.

Essential Enabling Conditions

The following are essential conditions for achieving the desired results of the strategic plan:

- Effective and focused leadership
- Alignment with mission and core principles
- Shared commitment to excellence
- Timely, targeted, two-way communication
- Engagement of all stakeholders
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Balance of effort on future planning and present-day operations
- Systemic capacity-building processes
- Resource allocations aligned with system priorities and needs
- Multiple measures of student, school, and district improvement and success, using world-class standards as benchmarks for performance excellence

Continuous quality improvement tools and processes will support the ongoing execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan. Together with families and the greater community, we will *inspire* a shared vision and a hopeful future; *innovate* and model creativity; *engage* and empower one another to act with purpose and focus; and *invest* in people and in our school system, building capacity for continuous quality improvement.